

ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE
STATE OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS
COURT SYSTEM

FISCAL YEAR 2003



SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

MARGARET H. MARSHALL
CHIEF JUSTICE

February 15, 2004

His Excellency Mitt Romney
Governor of the Commonwealth

Honorable Robert E. Travaglini
President of the Massachusetts Senate

Honorable Thomas M. Finneran
Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives

Dear Your Excellency, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker:

Under the provisions of G. L. c. 211B, § 9, I am pleased to submit to you the Annual Report on the State of the Massachusetts Court System, Fiscal Year 2003.

This Report highlights numerous accomplishments of our judges and employees in the Massachusetts court system who have been steadfast in serving the needs of the public and performing their core functions in the delivery of justice despite continuing budgetary challenges. The fiscal austerity, which has permeated all branches of government during the past two years, however, has sparked a dynamic exchange of ideas about court reform among the three governmental branches, the bar associations, and many others who care deeply about our judicial system.

Last year eight highly respected leaders from the business, academic and legal communities, led by Boston College Chancellor J. Donald Monan, S.J., responded to the Justices' call for a thorough examination of our court management structure and practices. The study of the Visiting Committee on Management in the Courts resulted in a masterful blueprint for comprehensive management reform. After seeking widespread perspectives from those within the system and many outside of it, we are now proceeding with the challenging task of transforming the vision of management excellence into reality throughout our court system.

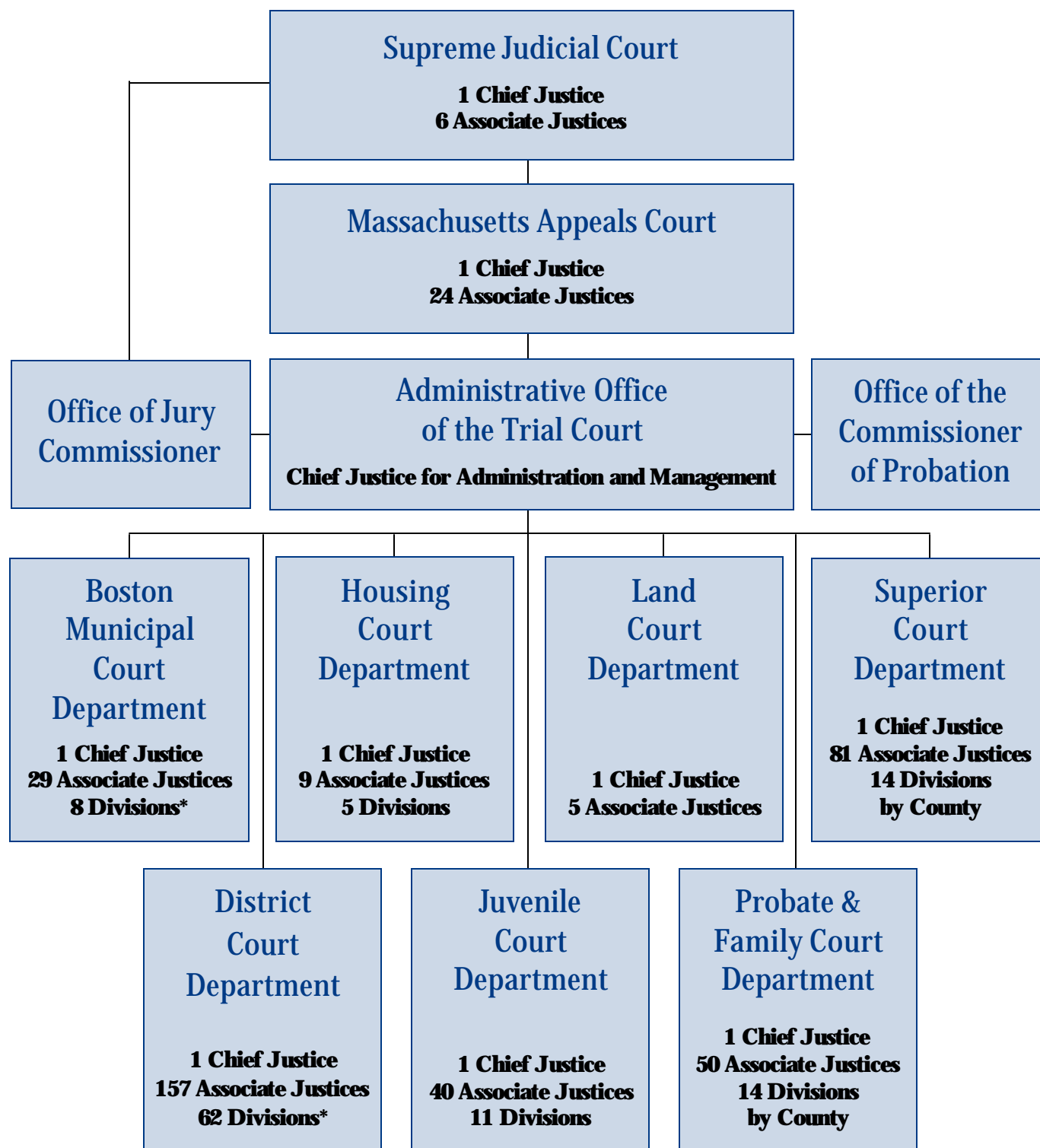
We are also focusing our efforts and making important strides in improving access to justice for non-English speaking individuals who require court interpretation, for self-represented litigants, and for those who have physical challenges in navigating our courthouses. Equal justice for all, a bedrock principle of our constitutional democracy, should be an achievable goal.

I commend the men and women of the Massachusetts court system for their dedicated efforts and achievements in serving the public well in the administration of justice. Together, with your support, we will continue to improve the delivery of justice in the Commonwealth.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Margaret H. Marshall", is written over a vertical line.

Margaret H. Marshall



* In accordance with G. L. c. 218, § 1, as amended by Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2003, the former District Court divisions in Brighton, Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Roxbury, South Boston, and West Roxbury were transferred to the Boston Municipal Court, effective July 1, 2003.

Note: The number of justices for all courts is the maximum authorized by statute; the actual number of judges varies depending on vacancies.

FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY OF CASES ENTERED

Five-Year Summary of Cases Entered in Massachusetts Courts¹

Court/Case Type	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
Supreme Judicial Court					
Cases Entered ²	936	898	694	917	933
Single Justice Cases	698	580	596	600	717
Bar Docket Cases	70	82	78	94	89
Appeals Court	2,298	2,164	1,731	1,911	1,630
Boston Municipal Court					
Criminal Cases	6,721	6,630	6,080	7,737	7,026
Civil Cases ³	11,046	10,899	9,125	8,732	8,477
Specialized ⁴	14,193	14,025	11,404	13,803	11,093
Clerk Hearings	8,464	4,915	8,822	10,410	9,715
District Court					
Criminal Cases	252,978	247,109	244,239	252,913	260,437
Juvenile Cases ⁵	10,738	5,844	5,631	6,222	4,110
Civil Cases ⁶	57,823	57,176	60,189	59,511	61,145
Specialized ⁷	195,712	194,629	200,124	207,259	216,174
Clerk Hearings	291,962	290,585	293,756	295,532	291,370
Housing Court⁸	40,933	40,433	41,140	39,753	35,737
Juvenile Court					
Delinquency	30,103	31,711	30,479	32,221	32,775
Youthful Offenders	829	648	571	438	549
Adults	309	576	639	677	583
CHINS Petitions	4,734	5,314	5,767	5,612	5,467
Care & Protection	1,873	2,229	2,392	2,251	2,334
Land Court					
Decree & Sub Plans	466	396	398	316	331
Entries ⁹	12,365	11,454	11,184	12,634	11,486
Probate & Family Court¹⁰	150,560	152,687	154,067	154,974	151,718
Superior Court					
Criminal Cases	8,840	5,018	5,009	5,621	5,613
Civil Cases ¹¹	28,432	29,965	24,829	25,041	25,106

¹ Neither Trial Court totals nor Judicial Branch totals are included in this table because cases in the different courts are not weighted to reflect their differential impact on court workload. Even the totals included in this table mask trends such as changes in pending caseload. For a more complete understanding of caseload trends and issues, refer to each court department's separate statistical data, at www.state.ma.us/courts.

² Includes direct entries, applications for direct and further appellate review, and transfers after review of entire Appeals Court caseload.

³ Includes regular and remand cases.

⁴ Includes abuse prevention petitions, mental health petitions, small claims, summary process, supplementary process (civil and small claims), and other civil cases.

⁵ Includes delinquency, CHINS, and care and protection cases.

⁶ Includes regular and remand cases.

⁷ Includes abuse prevention petitions, mental health petitions, small claims, summary process, supplementary process, and other civil cases.

⁸ Includes criminal, summary process, small claims, and civil cases.

⁹ Includes land registration, tax liens, and miscellaneous.

¹⁰ Includes divorce, separate support, abuse prevention, contempt, modifications, paternity, termination of parental rights, adoptions, wills and administration, guardianship and conservatorship, equity, and other actions.

¹¹ Includes contract, torts, business litigation, real property, equitable remedies, and miscellaneous.



From left to right, seated: Justice John M. Greaney, Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall, Justice Roderick L. Ireland, and Justice Francis X. Spina. Standing: Justice Martha B. Sosman, Justice Robert J. Cordy, and Justice Judith A. Cowin.

Chief Justice
Margaret H. Marshall

Associate Justices

John M. Greaney
Roderick L. Ireland

Francis X. Spina
Judith A. Cowin

Martha B. Sosman
Robert J. Cordy

Ronald P. Corbett, Jr., *Executive Director*
Maureen D. McGee, Esq., *Legal Counsel to the Chief Justice*
Neal Quenzer, Esq., *Chief Staff Counsel*

Maura S. Doyle, Esq., *Supreme Judicial Court Clerk for Suffolk County*
Susan Mellen, Esq., *Supreme Judicial Court Clerk for the Commonwealth*

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT

The Supreme Judicial Court, originally called the Superior Court of Judicature, was established in 1692 and is the oldest appellate court in continuous existence in the Western Hemisphere. It serves as the leader of the Massachusetts court system in two major respects: it holds final appellate authority regarding the decisions of all lower courts, and it exercises general superintendence over the administration of the lower courts.

The full bench, consisting of the Chief Justice and six Associate Justices, hears appeals on a broad range of criminal and civil cases from September through May. Single justice sessions are held each week throughout the year for certain motions pertaining to cases on trial or on appeal, bail reviews, bar discipline proceedings, petitions for admission to the bar, and a variety of other statutory proceedings. Each Associate Justice sits as single justice for a month at a time on a rotation schedule.

In addition to its appellate functions, the Court is responsible for the general superintendence of the Judiciary and of the bar, makes or approves rules for the operations of all the courts, and has varying degrees of oversight responsibility for several entities affiliated with the Judicial Branch, including the Board of Bar Overseers, the Board of Bar Examiners, the Clients' Security Board, and the Massachusetts Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Committee. In certain instances, the Court also provides advisory opinions, upon request, to the Governor, Governor's Council, and Legislature.

Supreme Judicial Court Caseload

	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
Direct Entries	151	127	138	119	119
Direct Appellate Review					
Applications Allowed/Considered	55/100	45/85	46/86	39/104	41/79
Further Appellate Review					
Applications Allowed/Considered	30/639	37/618	29/427	25/656	44/689
Transferred by SJC on its Motion from Review of Entire Appeals Court Caseload:	46	68	43	38	46
Gross Entries	282	277	255	221	250
Dismissals	34	25	28	33	15
Net Entries	248	252	227	188	235

Supreme Judicial Court Dispositions

	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
Full Opinions	209	175	155	175	158
Rescripts	54	18	44	52	47
Total Opinions	263	193	199	227	205
Total Appeals Decided ¹	272	199	204	230	208

¹ Indicates the total number of appeals resolved by the Court's opinions.



Top row, from left: Justices Joseph A. Trainor, David A. Mills, Phillip Rapoza, William I. Cowin, James F. McHugh, Andre A. Gelinas, Janis M. Berry, Mark V. Green, Fernande R. V. Duffly, and John H. Mason. Seated at bench: Justices Mel L. Greenberg, George Jacobs, and Frederick L. Brown; Chief Justice Christopher J. Armstrong; and Justices Charlotte Anne Perretta, Elizabeth A. Porada, and Kenneth Laurence. Standing in front of bench: Justices Barbara A. Lenk, Joseph A. Grasso, Jr., Gordon L. Doerfer, R. Marc Kantrowitz, Scott L. Kafker, Elspeth B. Cypher, Susan S. Beck, and Cynthia J. Cohen. Seated in front of bench: Recall Justices Gerald Gillerman, Kent B. Smith, Rudolph Kass¹, Raya S. Dreben, and Benjamin Kaplan.

Chief Justice

Christopher J. Armstrong

Associate Justices

Frederick L. Brown²
Charlotte Anne Perretta
George Jacobs³
Elizabeth A. Porada⁴
Mel L. Greenberg
Kenneth Laurence
Barbara A. Lenk
Susan S. Beck

Phillip Rapoza
Andre A. Gelinas
Fernande R. V. Duffly
Elspeth B. Cypher
John H. Mason
Joseph A. Grasso, Jr.
R. Marc Kantrowitz
William I. Cowin

Janis M. Berry
Gordon L. Doerfer
James F. McHugh
Scott L. Kafker
Cynthia J. Cohen
David A. Mills
Mark V. Green
Joseph A. Trainor

Alexander M. McNeil, Esq., *Administrative Assistant*
Daniel W. Thurler, Esq., *Special Projects Manager*

Ashley Brown Ahearn, Esq., *Clerk*

¹ Justice Rudolph Kass completed his service as Recall Justice on Sept 30, 2003.

² Justice Frederick L. Brown retired on August 10, 2003.

³ Justice George Jacobs retired on September 10, 2003.

⁴ Justice Elizabeth A. Porada retired on August 31, 2003.

Created in 1972, the Massachusetts Appeals Court is a court of general appellate jurisdiction. Most appeals from the Trial Court are entered initially in the Appeals Court; some are then transferred to the Supreme Judicial Court, but a majority is decided by the Appeals Court. Appeals in certain cases in Trial Court departments are made first to the appellate divisions of those departments. The Appeals Court also has jurisdiction over appeals from final decisions of two state agencies: the Appellate Tax Board and the Labor Relations Commission.

The Appeals Court has a Chief Justice and twenty-four Associate Justices. Fiscal year 2003 was the first year during which the Appeals Court operated with a full complement of twenty-five statutory judges. During portions of Fiscal Year 2003 the court was fortunate also to have the services on recall of four retired appellate judges: Justices Raya Dreben, Rudolph Kass and Kent Smith (all retired Appeals Court justices) and Justice Benjamin Kaplan (a retired Supreme Judicial Court justice). The collective judicial experience of the recall justices continued to be of immeasurable help during Fiscal Year 2003, not only to assist the court in its principal task of deciding cases, but also to continue to facilitate the absorption of a large number of new judges.

Like most intermediate appellate courts, the Appeals Court usually sits in panels of three. The composition of the three-judge panels changes regularly, so that each Justice has the opportunity to sit with every other Justice. The Court holds sessions in Boston every month from September through June; it also holds sessions throughout the year in locations outside Boston.

In addition to its appellate, or “panel,” jurisdiction, the Appeals Court runs a continuous single justice session, with a separate docket. The single justice may review interlocutory orders and orders for injunctive relief issued by certain Trial Court departments, as well as requests for review of summary process appeal bonds, certain attorney’s fee awards, motions for stays of civil proceedings or criminal sentences pending appeal, and motions to review impoundment orders. In addition, appeals from decisions of the Department of Industrial Accidents are taken to the single justice. Each Associate Justice sits as single justice for a month at a time.

Massachusetts Appeals Court Dispositions, Fiscal Year 2003

Total Panel entries:	1,630
Transferred to Supreme Judicial Court	87
Dismissed/Settled/Withdrawn/Consolidated	540
Net Annual Entries	1,003
Published Opinions	368
Summary Dispositions	1,025
Total Decisions (720 Civil, 673 Criminal)	1,393
Decision of Lower Court Affirmed (545 Civil, 536 Criminal)	1,081
Decision of Lower Court Reversed (111 Civil, 96 Criminal)	207
Other Result Reached (64 Civil, 41 Criminal)	105



From left are: Probate and Family Court Chief Justice Sean M. Dunphy, Housing Court Chief Justice Manuel Kyriakakis, Superior Court Chief Justice Suzanne DelVecchio, District Court Chief Justice Samuel E. Zoll, Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara, Land Court Chief Justice Karyn F. Scheier, Juvenile Court Chief Justice Martha P. Grace, and Boston Municipal Court Charles R. Johnson.

Chief Justice for Administration and Management

Barbara A. Dortch-Okara¹

Administrative Office of the Trial Court Chief of Staff: Marilyn J. Wellington, Esq.²

Boston Municipal Court Department

Chief Justice: Charles R. Johnson³

Court Administrator: Helen A. Quigley, Esq.⁴

District Court Department

Chief Justice: Samuel E. Zoll

Court Administrator: Jerome S. Berg, Esq.⁵

Housing Court Department

Chief Justice: Manuel Kyriakakis

Court Administrator: Harvey J. Chopp, Esq.

Juvenile Court Department

Chief Justice: Martha P. Grace

Court Administrator: Jane Strickland, Esq.

Land Court Department

Chief Justice: Karyn F. Scheier⁶

Court Administrator: Ellen B. Bransfield, Esq.

Probate and Family Court Department

Chief Justice: Sean M. Dunphy

Court Administrator: John E. McNichols, Esq.

Superior Court Department

Chief Justice: Suzanne DelVecchio

Court Administrator: Dana L. Leavitt

Office of the Commissioner of Probation

Commissioner: John J. O'Brien

Office of Jury Commissioner

Acting Commissioner: John P. Mulvey, Esq.⁷

¹ Chief Justice Barbara A. Dortch-Okara's term of office ended October 1, 2003. Hon. Robert A. Mulligan was appointed Chief Justice for Administration and Management by the Supreme Judicial Court.

² Robert P. Panneton was appointed Acting Chief of Staff on October 1, 2003. Francis J. Carney, Jr., Ph.D., was appointed Executive Director.

³ Hon. Charles R. Johnson was appointed Chief Justice on March 28, 2003, following the retirement of Chief Justice William J. Tierney.

⁴ Marilyn J. Wellington, Esq., was appointed Acting Court Administrator upon the retirement of Helen A. Quigley, Esq., on October 2, 2003.

⁵ Michael J. Shea, Esq., was appointed Acting Court Administrator upon the retirement of Jerome S. Berg, Esq., on October 2, 2003.

⁶ Hon. Karyn F. Scheier was appointed Chief Justice on February 17, 2003, upon the retirement of Chief Justice Peter W. Kilborn.

⁷ John P. Mulvey, Esq., was appointed Acting Commissioner on April 11, 2002, upon the death of Acting Commissioner Brian T. McNally. On November 3, 2003, Pamela J. Wood, Esq., was appointed Jury Commissioner.

The Chief Justice for Administration and Management has authority over and responsibility for the administration and management of the Trial Court of Massachusetts. Assisting the Chief Justice is the Administrative Office of the Trial Court, which is made up of nine departments: Court Capital Projects Department, Court Facilities Bureau, Fiscal Affairs Department, Human Resources Department, Information Technology Department, Judicial Institute, Legal Department, Planning and Development Department, and Security Department. The Office of the Commissioner of Probation and the Office of Jury Commissioner are also part of the Trial Court. The Commissioner of Probation is appointed by the Chief Justice for Administration and Management; the Jury Commissioner is appointed by the Supreme Judicial Court.

Boston Municipal Court: The jurisdiction of the Boston Municipal Court Department is similar to that of the District Court Department. The Central Division covers the geographic areas of downtown Boston, Beacon Hill, and part of the Back Bay. By statute, the former District Court divisions of Brighton, Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Roxbury, South Boston, and West Roxbury were added to the Boston Municipal Court's jurisdiction. The Boston Municipal Court also has county-wide jurisdiction over civil actions seeking money damages and trustee process, and statewide jurisdiction for review of findings of the State Police Trial Board.

District Court: The District Court Department has civil jurisdiction over, among other matters, money damage cases in tort and contract; small claims; summary process; and mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse commitments; and juvenile matters in districts without a Juvenile Court. Criminal jurisdiction includes all misdemeanors and certain felonies. The Court also has jurisdiction over evictions and some related matters, and provides judicial review of a number of governmental agency actions such as Attorney General victim compensation decisions and police department firearm license denials. There are sixty-two divisions of the District Court.

Housing Court: The Housing Court Department has jurisdiction over the "use of any real property and activities conducted thereon as such use affects the health, welfare, and safety of any resident, occupant, user, or member of the general public" (G. L. c. 185C, § 3). The Housing Court has five divisions in Massachusetts: Boston, Worcester, Western, Northeast, and Southeast.

Juvenile Court: The Juvenile Court Department handles criminal and civil matters concerning defendants seventeen years old and younger. It has general jurisdiction over cases involving delinquency, children in need of services, care and protection petitions, adults contributing to the delinquency of minors, adoption, guardianship, termination of parental rights proceedings, and youthful offenders. When the 1992 Court Reorganization Act is fully implemented, the Court will comprise eleven divisions in more than forty locations.

Land Court: The Land Court Department has exclusive, original jurisdiction over the registration of title to real property, all matters and disputes concerning such title subsequent to registration, and foreclosure and redemption of real estate tax liens. The Court has concurrent jurisdiction over specific performance of contracts relating to real estate and over petitions for partitions of real estate. Under G. L. c. 40A and 41, the Court shares jurisdiction over matters arising out of decisions by local planning boards and zoning boards of appeal. The Court also shares jurisdiction over the processing of mortgage foreclosure cases and determining the military status of the mortgagor. The Land Court has superintendency authority over the registered land office in each Registry of Deeds. Based in Boston, the Land Court also schedules sessions elsewhere within the state for the convenience of the public.

Probate and Family Court: The Probate and Family Court Department has jurisdiction over family-related matters such as divorce, paternity, child support, custody, visitation, adoption, termination of parental rights, and abuse prevention. Probate matters include jurisdiction over wills, administrations, guardianships, conservatorships, and changes of name. The Court has fourteen divisions.

Superior Court: The Superior Court Department has general original jurisdiction over most felonies and civil actions, including matters in which equitable relief is sought. The Superior Court has jurisdiction to review certain administrative decisions. The Superior Court has fourteen divisions, one for each county, of which several hold sessions in more than one location.

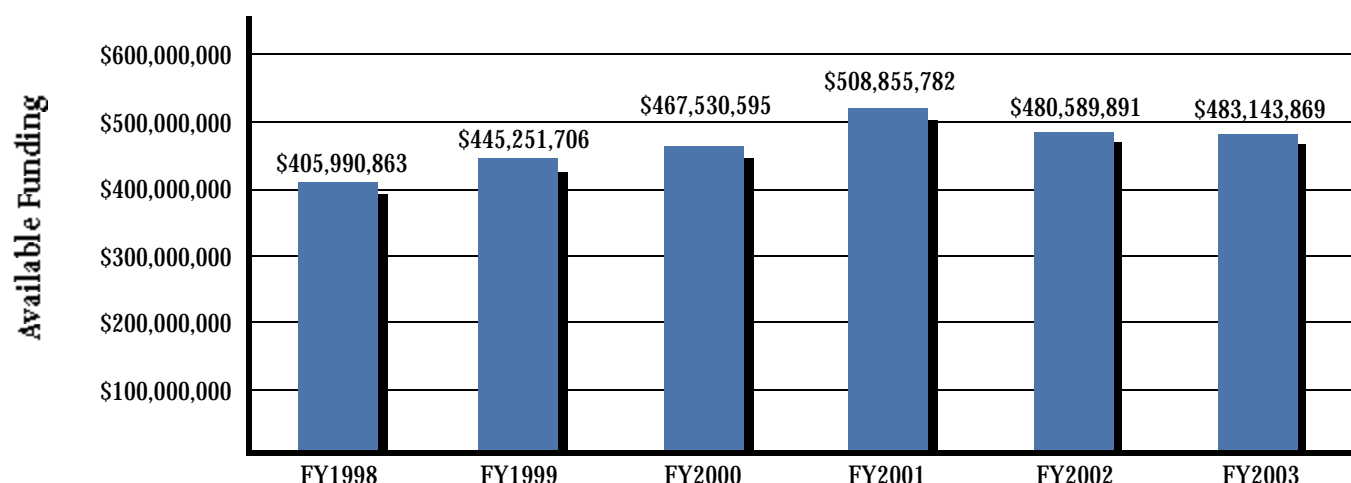
Office of the Commissioner of Probation: This office supervises the Massachusetts Probation Service, which assists in the delivery of justice through investigations, community supervision of offenders, diversion of appropriate offenders from institutional sentences, reduction in crime, mediations, service to victims, and other community service functions. The office also oversees the Office of Community Corrections.

Trial Court by the Numbers, Fiscal Year 2003

135 buildings
7,091 employees, as of June 30, 2003
378 authorized justices
\$483,143,869 in funding
369,950 jurors served in a trial

Office of Jury Commissioner: This office oversees the selection and management of all jurors in the Commonwealth until they appear at the courthouse. The Office is responsible for the daily supervision of the nation's first statewide implementation of the One-Day/One-Trial Jury System, in which jurors complete service in one day or serve for the duration of one trial. Fifty-eight jury pool locations throughout the Commonwealth are supplied daily with jurors.

Trial Court Funding



Breakdown of Trial Court Funding, Fiscal Year 2003

	Dollar Amount	Percent of Total
Trial Court Operating Appropriations	\$455,777,137	94.3%
Capital / Bond Funds	\$12,716,979	2.6%
Automation Bond Funds	\$6,393,129	1.3%
Grants, Trusts, and Intergovernmental Funds	\$5,941,223	1.2%
Executive Office of Administration and Finance Reserve	\$1,565,401	0.3%
Retained Revenue	\$750,000	0.2%
Total	\$483,143,869	100%

Trial Court Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2003

	Dollar Amount	Percent of Total
Court Employee Salaries	\$289,989,384	64.3%
Facility Rental, Maintenance, and Operation	\$42,714,073	9.5%
Office and Court Operations	\$42,488,803	9.4%
Judicial Salaries	\$41,546,868	9.2%
Case Driven Expenses	\$16,437,814	3.7%
Employee Related Expenses	\$12,824,381	2.8%
Law Library Expenses	\$4,984,553	1.1%
Total	\$450,985,876	100%

Trial Court Interdepartmental Transfers, Fiscal Year 2003

Department	Total Transferred Within Department
Central Accounts	\$1,823,404
Superior Court Department	\$99,491
District Court Department	\$991,177
Probate and Family Court Department	\$192,637
Land Court Department	\$0
Boston Municipal Court	\$0
Housing Court Department	\$85,000
Juvenile Court Department	\$165,000
Total	\$3,356,709

The focus during the past year has been on assessing the management of the Trial Court. This assessment has occurred during a period of diminishing resources. The number of Trial Court employees

has decreased by more than 1,200 since July 2001. While it is important to make every effort to secure threshold funding, it is equally important not to be deterred by budgetary shortfalls. A creative and disciplined approach is required to improve court management. During the past year, the Visiting Committee on Management in the Courts, comprised of a highly creditable group with deep management experience and expertise, spent hundreds of hours examining the operations of the Trial Court and produced an insightful, objective assessment of court management. The Visiting Committee's Report provides a blueprint for improving management practices in the court system.



Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall, left, congratulates Hon. Robert A. Mulligan on October 1, 2003, the first day of his term as Chief Justice for Administration and Management.

Court Management Goals

It is important to stress that the Visiting Committee found that court problems today are not due to a lack of dedicated, talented employees. Nor did the Visiting Committee take issue with the quality of justice. Rather, the Visiting Committee found that dedicated court employees are constrained from delivering the highest quality of service in a timely manner by an inefficient management structure. Therefore, the main recommendation for the upcoming year is to improve administrative structures and processes so that the same high quality of justice may be delivered more efficiently. Based on the Visiting Committee's recommendations, the goal for the upcoming year is to enhance court management by implementing the following three initiatives:

1. The development of a performance evaluation system to serve as a basis for measuring and improving the delivery of services by the various units of the Trial Court;
2. The formulation of a court staffing model that will establish a fair and equitable process for allocating resources within the Trial Court;
3. The design and implementation of a time standards system for each trial court department which will set goals, establish metrics, and promote expeditious and timely processing of matters before the courts.

TRIAL COURT RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

MassCourts

There are two very important projects presently underway which are vital to the effort to improve the management of the courts. The first is *MassCourts*, the Trial Court automation system. This is an enormous undertaking, critical to improving court management by systematically providing the data to inform decisions and enhance the management practices.

Facilities Construction

The second crucial area is the facilities construction program. During the past year, a moratorium on all state construction projects was announced. This action placed on hold key court projects in Worcester, Plymouth, and Taunton — projects in which tens of thousands of hours of collaborative planning have been invested and which are poised to go forward. This moratorium provides an opportunity to re-examine our pending courthouse designs to ensure that, wherever possible, we adopt the principle of integrating the different Trial Court departments into the design for each courthouse.

In this effort to implement positive change in the management of the court system, it is very important to develop and maintain strong working relationships with the bar, legislative and executive branch leaders, and community representatives.

Chief Justice Marshall and Chief Justice Mulligan speak with reporters on June 10, 2003, following the Supreme Judicial Court's appointment of Chief Justice Mulligan as the next Chief Justice for Administration and Management of the Trial Court.



VISITING COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT IN THE COURTS

On August 6, 2002, Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall announced the establishment of the Visiting Committee on Management in the Courts to examine the standards and effectiveness of managerial systems within the courts and to make recommendations for improvements. Under the chairmanship of

Boston College Chancellor J. Donald Monan, S.J., the Visiting Committee of eight highly respected leaders from business, academia, and the legal community over the following seven months conducted a rigorous, comprehensive assessment of management practices within the courts.

The Visiting Committee presented its Report to the Court on March 4, 2003, in which it recommended fourteen actions falling within three initiatives of change: committing to new lead-

ership norms and structures; creating a culture of high performance and accountability; and establishing discipline in resource allocation and use. The full Report may be accessed on the court system website, www.state.ma.us/courts.

The seven Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court solicited comment on the Report's findings in a series of discussions with hundreds of people inside and outside the court system. The Justices met with First Justices, Regional Administrative Judges, clerk-magistrates, and chief probation officers in courthouses throughout the Commonwealth, as well as with members of the Executive and Legislative branches and leaders of business, legal, law enforcement, and community organizations.

"The Visiting Committee has provided us with a Report that is both a comprehensive analysis of the current management structure, and a thoughtful blueprint for achieving managerial excellence in the future," Chief Justice Marshall said. "The Committee members' extraordinary efforts are proving invaluable as we shape our course toward enhancing the administration of justice in the Commonwealth by creating a modern management system worthy of the public."



Seated, from left, are Visiting Committee members Ralph C. Martin II, partner at Bingham McCutchen LLP and former Suffolk County District Attorney; Wesley W. Marple, Jr., Professor of Finance at Northeastern University; Committee Chair J. Donald Monan, S.J., Chancellor of Boston College; Dorothy A. Terrell, Partner, First Light Capital; and Hon. A. David Mazzone, Senior Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. Standing, from left, are Justice Robert J. Cordy, Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall, Justice Judith A. Cowin, Justice John M. Greaney, Justice Martha B. Sosman, Justice Roderick L. Ireland, and Justice Francis X. Spina. Not pictured are Visiting Committee Vice-Chairs Patricia McGovern, Special Counsel and Senior Vice President of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and William C. Van Faasen, President and Chief Executive Officer of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts; and member Charles D. Baker, President and Chief Executive Officer of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care.

COURT ADMINISTRATION

◆ Mandatory cost increases for space leases, employee step rate increases, and other contractual obligations resulted in an initial shortfall of approximately \$10 million in the Trial Court's fiscal year 2003 budget. The shortfall was eliminated by voluntary and involuntary layoffs, voluntary reductions in work hours, renegotiation of space leases, and reductions in expenses for case-related services, photocopier leases, and printing.

◆ A record number of probationers and parolees entered the Office of the Commissioner of Probation's Electronic Monitoring Program in fiscal year 2003. In its two years of operation, the program has used electronic monitoring bracelets to track 2,800 offenders for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The program costs approximately \$1,500 per offender per year, while incarceration costs approximately \$32,000 per year.

◆ The Administrative Office of the Trial Court's Office of Court Interpreter Services reduced costs for per-diem court interpreters by approximately \$1,000,000 by requiring courts to schedule cases needing interpretation on the same day whenever possible and no longer automatically providing interpreters for afternoon sessions.

◆ In September, 2002, the Office of Jury Commissioner eliminated Friday jury sessions at all courts in the Commonwealth and provided sixteen fewer jurors to each of the largest jury pools. The measures saved approximately \$225,000 during the fiscal year.

◆ The Supreme Judicial Court Committee on Judicial Performance Evaluation conducted three rounds of evaluation in fiscal year 2003. Court employees, attorneys, and jurors evaluated forty-seven judges in Suffolk County, including judges in the Boston Municipal Court, District Court, and Housing Court in autumn 2002; thirty-one Superior Court judges in Suffolk and Middlesex counties in winter 2003; and fifty District Court, Housing Court, Juvenile Court, and Probate and Family Court judges in Middlesex County in the following spring. Evaluated judges meet with their departmental chief justices to review the results, and copies are sent to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court and the Chief Justice for Administration and Management.

In July, 2003, then Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara addresses Chief Justices, Justices, and court administrators at one of two MassCourts leadership conferences held during the fiscal year, in preparation for the piloting of the Trial Court's comprehensive, integrated case management system. When complete, MassCourts will provide a powerful information management tool for every Trial Court department, division, and office.



◆ The Study Committee on Trial Transcripts, established by the Supreme Judicial Court in January, 2003, and chaired by Appeals Court Justice Mark V. Green, examined how the timeliness and accuracy of trial transcripts could be improved. The Committee's Report, issued June 30, 2003, recommends a series of significant, structural changes in how transcripts are produced. After widely distributing the Report to members of the court and legal communities for comment, the Supreme Judicial Court in January 2004 forwarded the Report and comments to the Administrative Office of the Trial Court for development of a plan to implement changes in the transcription preparation process.



From left, Supreme Judicial Court Justice Francis X. Spina, Supreme Judicial Court Executive Director Ronald P. Corbett, Jr., Franklin Probate and Family Court First Justice Geoffrey A. Wilson, and Orange District Court First Justice David S. Ross listen to court managers' comments on the Report by the Visiting Committee on Management in the Courts during a meeting in Northampton on May 14, 2003.

◆ District Court regional offices conducted Court Status Reviews of all the Court's divisions. Such reviews analyze the performance of the clerk's office, and are being expanded to cover caseload management and other areas.

◆ The Committee on the Administration of Interpreters promulgated Standards and Procedures of the Office of Court Interpreters, following extensive consultation with interested parties inside and outside the courts, including a series of five public hearings held at

different sites in the state. The Standards represent a valuable source of information on the utilization and provision of interpreter services to the Trial Court.

◆ The Tenancy Preservation Project, a cooperative effort between the Housing Court and private non-profit agencies, assists tenants whose mental illness, substance abuse, or other mental impairment may be jeopardizing their tenancies. The Court's Boston, Southeast, and Western divisions can immediately refer cases to Project staff, who assess the tenant and develop a plan to stabilize the tenancy or determine a more appropriate living situation. More than 50 percent of tenants helped by the Project have been able to avoid homelessness, with a success rate of more than 85 percent in the Western Division.

◆ Suffolk Superior Court implemented a pilot program in which all restraining orders are heard in one session on a daily rotation, with a screener sitting in on the session.

COURT ADMINISTRATION

◆ The Administrative Office of the Trial Court's Judicial Institute and Court Capital Projects, Human Resources, and Legal departments, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities and the Division of Capital Asset Management, presented ten half-day programs for court staff on serving persons with disabilities. Curriculum included a history of disability rights, an explanation of who is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, consideration of hidden disabilities, discussion of reasonable accommodations, and discussion of related Trial Court policies and procedures.

◆ The Domestic Violence Court Assessment Project, coordinated by the AOTC Human Resources Department and the Trial Court Domestic Violence Court Assessment Project Advisory Committee, completed the Report, *Progress and Challenges: Viewpoints on the Trial Court's Response to Domestic Violence*. The report assesses court procedures for handling cases of domestic violence.

◆ For the second consecutive year, the Administrative Office of the Trial Court's Judicial Institute expanded its collaboration with outside entities. The Governor's Highway Safety Bureau, the Division of Capital Asset Management, Massachusetts General Hospital, the State Justice Institute, the Violence Against Women's Office, and the Leadership Institute in Judicial Education provided more than \$90,000 for Judicial Institute programs.

◆ Trial courts benefited from grants awarded to several collaborating partners. The Essex County Juvenile Court continued its drug court sessions in Salem and Lynn through an award for \$386,114 from the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to CAB Health and Recovery Services, a health service based in Danvers. SAMHSA also provided \$400,000 to the Cape Cod Alcoholism and Rehabilitation Unit, allowing the Barnstable District Court to enhance its drug court program.



In March, 2003, the venue for cases brought into the Superior Court Business Litigation Session, sitting in Suffolk County, was expanded to include cases that otherwise would be filed in Essex, Middlesex, and Norfolk counties. Since its inception in October, 2000, the Business Litigation Session has earned extremely favorable reviews by the business litigation bar for its fairness, efficiency, and promptness. Cases in the Session are heard by Judge Margot Botsford, left, and Judge Allan van Gestel.

Grant Awards to the Trial Court

Administrative Office of the Trial Court		Dorchester District Court	
Domestic Violence Court Assessment	\$123,000	Judicial Oversight Demonstration Project	\$900,788
National Traffic Court Seminar	\$1,125	Judicial Institute	
Cambridge District Court		Highway Safety Training and Education	\$48,811
Greater Boston Adult Drug Courts		Massachusetts Sentencing Commission	
Case Management Services	\$30,000	Sentencing Sex Offenders	\$35,000
Office of the Commissioner of Probation		National Conference on Sentencing and Justice	\$2,000
Substance Abuse Assessment		West Roxbury District Court	
for Offenders on Probation	\$150,000	Forensic Access to Community Services	
Domestic Violence Training the Trainers	\$10,000	— Year 2	\$56,364



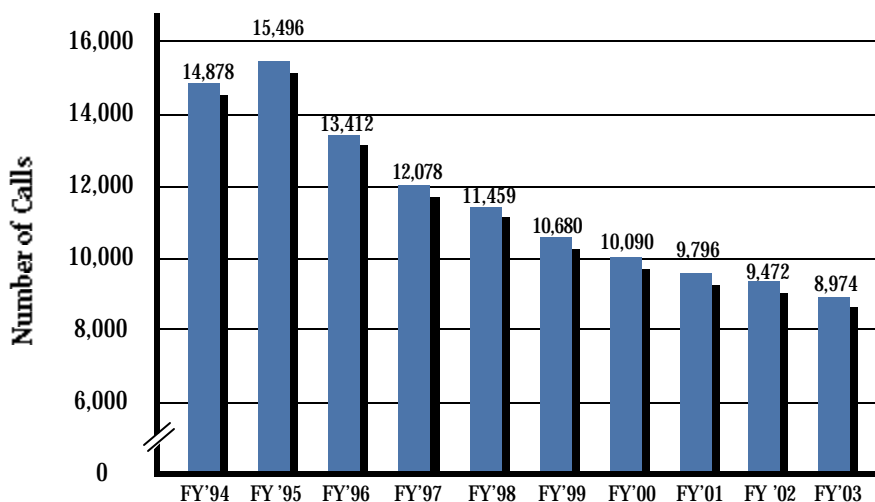
Pamela J. Wood, Esq., was appointed Jury Commissioner by the Supreme Judicial Court in November, 2003.

◆ The Judicial Institute's two-day seminar for judges about issues that arise in sexual assault cases has attracted the attention of national groups interested in learning how the curriculum could be adapted for other states. The seminar covers Massachusetts legal and procedural issues in such cases, as well as information on the psychological and behavioral dynamics of victims and perpetrators, offender treatment, the Sex Offender Registry, and related topics. A Judicial Institute program manager based the curriculum on one developed by the National Judicial Education Program and the National Association of Women Judges.

◆ The United States Department of Health and Human Services recognized Massachusetts as a "national model for permanency mediation" when it awarded an Adoption Excellence Award to the Massachusetts Coalition for Permanency for Children. The MCPC is a multi-disciplinary volunteer group with representation from the Probate and Family Court and the Juvenile Court that helps foster children move to permanent, stable, and loving homes.

Judicial Response System

Total Number of Calls, Fiscal Years 1994 — 2003



The Trial Court's Judicial Response System provides emergency judicial intervention 365 days a year, during all hours that the courts are closed. Service on the system is mandatory for all judges in the seven departments of the Trial Court. One judge is on call in each of eight geographic regions every week, addressing such cases as domestic violence restraining orders, medical emergencies, mental health/psychiatric hospitalizations, and search warrants.

◆ Mediation services continued to be a major focus of the Juvenile Court Department. Twenty-four court-approved mediation programs provide a variety of services, including mediation of juvenile delinquency cases and for children and families involved in Children in Need of Services cases.

◆ Cases involving children under the care of the State Department of Social Services are expedited in the Appeals Court under the supervision of an Associate Justice. Once briefs are complete, DSS cases are scheduled promptly for oral argument. The median time interval for a DSS case, measured from entry in the Appeals Court until issuance of the decision, is 210 days.

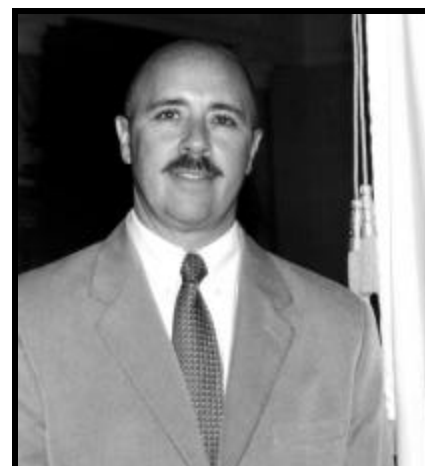
◆ After several years of study and a public comment period, the Supreme Judicial Court adopted a new Code of Judicial Conduct, effective October 1, 2003, applicable to all state judges in Massachusetts.

COURT ADMINISTRATION

◆ The backlog of fully briefed cases at the Appeals Court dropped significantly, as the Court disposed of 390 more cases than it took in during the fiscal year. The intervals between completion of briefing and consideration of cases declined from seventeen months to twelve months for civil cases, and from nine months to six months for criminal cases.

◆ The Supreme Judicial Court Committee on Judicial Ethics issued twenty-one formal advisory opinions and gave informal advice in forty-six cases to judges and judicial nominees regarding their ethical and professional obligations. The advisory opinions and other information about the Committee are available on the Supreme Judicial Court section of the court system website, www.state.ma.us/courts.

◆ The Supreme Judicial Court Office of the Reporter of Decisions published 575 opinions, totaling 5,012 printed pages, of the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court and Appeals Court. The numbers of opinions and pages are similar to those of fiscal year 2002, which represented a significant increase over the averages of the previous four years.



Worcester Probate and Family Court
Assistant Register Michael F. Herman, the
2003 Trial Court Employee of the Year

2003 Trial Court Employee Excellence Award Winners

Thomas W. Alfonse
Assistant Clerk-Magistrate
New Bedford District Court

Jessica Bonsignore
Case Specialist IV
Boston Municipal Court

Vera Brown
Operations Supervisor II
Essex Probate
and Family Court

Kevin Buckley
Court Operations Analyst
and Webmaster
AOTC IT Department

Rose Marie Carelli
Court Officer
Worcester Superior Court

Carmen Diaz
Telephone Scheduler II
Office of Jury Commissioner

Colin Doherty
Associate Court Officer
Lynn District Court

Nancy Farrell
Head Administrative Assistant
Dedham District Court

Gaye Gentes, Manager, and Staff
AOTC Office of Court
Interpreter Services

Margaret Hayden
Electronic Resources
Librarian
Trial Court Law Libraries

Sheila Larkin
Head Administrative
Assistant
Fitchburg District Court

Matthew Lefebvre
Case Coordinator
Hampden Superior Court

Grisel Lind
Judicial Secretary
Essex Juvenile Court

Nancy Macauley
Probation Officer
Berkshire Juvenile Court

Barbara McDonough
Administrative Coordinator
Office of the Commissioner
of Probation

Joseph Piknick
Associate Court Officer
Lynn District Court

Lawrence Sullivan
Court Officer
Norfolk Superior Court

Office of Court Interpreter Services

Clients Served, by Language, in Fiscal Year 2003

Language	Clients	Percent
Spanish	50,237	70.98%
Portuguese	11,179	15.79%
Khmer	1,985	2.80%
Vietnamese	1,612	2.28%
Haitian	1,099	1.55%
Russian	1,016	1.44%
Cape Verdean	789	1.11%
Other	2,859	4.05%
Total	70,776	100.00%

◆ Working with the bar and surveyors, the Land Court is producing two publications to assist people with business before the Court. The *Guidelines on Registered Land*, first issued in 2000, is being refined to incorporate comments received by attorneys and registers of deeds. The *Engineering Manual* provides information and instructions to surveyors and attorneys for filing plans in the Court.

◆ The Supreme Judicial Court and the Massachusetts Appeals Court temporarily moved from the New Suffolk County Courthouse, to allow the building to be renovated. The Supreme Judicial Court moved to One Beacon Street, and the Appeals Court moved across Pemberton Square to the Center Plaza building. Both appellate courts and the Social Law Library are scheduled to move to the John Adams Courthouse when its renovation is completed, in fiscal year 2005.

◆ The Administrative Office of the District Court, the Administrative Office of the Juvenile Court, the Administrative Office of the Probate and Family Court, and the Judicial Institute were relocated from the Edward W. Brooke Courthouse in Boston to the Center Plaza building.

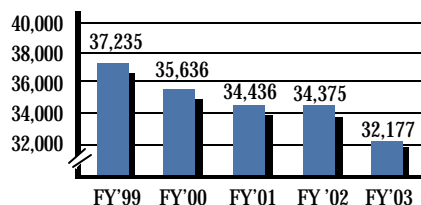
◆ The Norfolk Probate and Family Court in Dedham was relocated to newly renovated space in Canton.

◆ The Hampden County Juvenile Court established a drug court session in Springfield and Holyoke in October of 2002, with formal sessions held at the sites on alternate weeks.

◆ The Bristol County Juvenile Court's drug court session in New Bedford became fully operational, with weekly sessions for non-violent male and female juvenile offenders between the ages of fourteen and sixteen and one-half and who are involved with drugs or alcohol. The session uses a positive, community-based approach to help juveniles lead productive, substance-free, and crime-free lives.

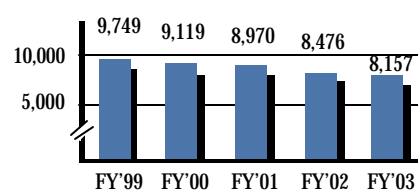
Abuse Prevention Petition Overview

Civil Restraining Order Registry



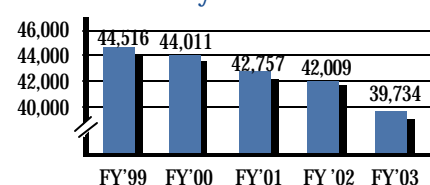
The Civil Restraining Order Registry is kept by the Office of the Commissioner of Probation. It is a central database of restraining orders issued against defendants which is used by police departments and judges.

Judicial Response System Calls



The number of requests for abuse protection and restraining orders made after court hours to judges serving on the Judicial Response System.

District/Boston Municipal/Probate & Family Courts



The number of Abuse Prevention Petitions filed in the three Courts for the years listed.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS

◆ In January, 2003, the Administrative Office of the Trial Court selected Maximus Justice Solutions of Reston, Virginia, to provide the software for *MassCourts*, the Trial Court's comprehensive, statewide information technology system. The selection concluded a rigorous, months-long process in which an evaluation team of twenty-eight representatives from the Judicial and Executive branches closely examined proposals by four vendors.

◆ In March, 2003, the *MassCourts* team of representatives from each Trial Court department and the Office of the Commissioner of Probation, the IT Project Office, and Maximus Justice Solutions comprehensively defined the thousands of business requirements to be fulfilled by *MassCourts*.

◆ The BasCOT Civil case management system, which will be folded into the *MassCourts* system, was launched in thirty-four District Courts. All District Courts are scheduled to be using the system in early 2004.

◆ The AOTC Legal Department began tracking all work pending within the Department on a computer program designed by the Information Technology Department. The new program allows information to be sorted by type of work, attorney assigned, and due date.



A pilot version of *MassCourts*, featuring electronic filing of criminal complaints, warrant processing, docketing, scheduling, and management reporting, was launched in November, 2003, in the Boston Municipal Court Clerk's Office for Criminal Business. Gathered near two computers that access the system are, clockwise from upper left: Richard McKinnon, Supervisor; Mark Concannon, Assistant Clerk in Charge of Juries; Paul W. Johnston, IT Project Lead Court Operations Analyst; Thomas Nelson, Head Administrative Assistant; Patricia Neff, Office Manager; Rosemary Carr, Assistant Clerk-Magistrate; and Denise Donovan, Judicial Assistant.

Judicial Branch Websites

Massachusetts Judicial Branch:
www.state.ma.us/courts
www.mass.gov/courts

Board of Bar Examiners:
www.mass.gov/bbe

Board of Bar Overseers
 and Office of Bar Counsel:
www.mass.gov/obcbbo

Commission on Judicial Conduct:
www.state.ma.us/cjc

Massachusetts Interest on Lawyers'
 Trust Accounts Program:
www.maiolta.org

John Adams Courthouse
 Renovations Project:
<http://renovation.sociallaw.com>

Office of Jury Commissioner:
www.massjury.com

Massachusetts Trial Court
 Law Libraries:
www.lawlib.state.ma.us

Social Law Library:
www.sociallaw.com

Supreme Judicial Court
 and Appeals Court
 Public Case Information:
<http://ma-appellatecourts.org/>

Supreme Judicial Court
 Reporter of Decisions:
www.massreports.com

Supreme Judicial Court
 Clerk for Suffolk County:
www.sjccountyclerk.com

Supreme Judicial Court
 Historical Society:
www.sjchs-history.org

In an ongoing effort to reach out to Trial Court judges and staff, Information Technology Project leaders and staff frequently demonstrated the progress of MassCourts in courts throughout the Commonwealth. In the photo, Superior Court Judge Timothy S. Hillman, the IT Project Executive Director, explains to members of the staff at Middlesex Probate and Family Court how MassCourts will increase the efficiency of Trial Court operations.



- ◆ The Superior Court scanned 5,000 case documents, converted them to PDF format, and copied them onto compact discs for distribution to the media and the public. The project was completed in two days, with significant cost savings over the distribution of such a high volume of paper documents.
- ◆ Trial Courts in Suffolk and Middlesex counties are using digital audio equipment to record court proceedings on a pilot basis. The digital systems record up to eight hours of audio files on a single compact disc, which can be more easily searched, copied and distributed than cassette tapes.
- ◆ To strike a balance between the interests of the public in having access to court case information and the privacy interests of individuals involved in the cases, the Supreme Judicial Court in June, 2003, announced a policy regarding the publication of information on the World Wide Web. The policy is available on the court system website, at www.state.ma.us/courts/webpolicy.pdf.
- ◆ The Supreme Judicial Court and the Appeals Court launched their case information website, www.ma-appellatecourts.org. The site provides up-to-date information on the scheduling and status of cases in both courts for the bar and the public.

◆ Approximately 2,000 people received daily notification of appellate court decisions via automatic emails linked to the Supreme Judicial Court's Office of the Reporter of Decisions website, www.massreports.com. About 1,200 people received automatic notification during the previous fiscal year.

◆ In response to moves by the Supreme Judicial Court to One Beacon Street and the Appeals Court to the nearby Center Plaza building in Boston, the Supreme Judicial Court Information Technology Office, in collaboration with the Admini-

strative Office of the Trial Court's Information Technology Department, relocated the appellate courts' network servers to Center Plaza and linked them to the court offices via laser.

◆ The Supreme Judicial Court and the Appeals Court continued to develop an electronic filing system in which litigants may file documents with the courts electronically. The courts' Information Technology Office acquired a server to run the project and outlined a pilot program.

OUTREACH TO THE PUBLIC

◆ The Massachusetts Appeals Court conducted eight sessions outside Suffolk County. Five sittings were held at law schools: two at Western New England College School of Law, two at Southern New England School of Law, and one at New England School of Law. Following the sessions the justices met with students and discussed the Court's operating procedures and the appellate process. Two sittings also were held in Pittsfield, and one in Worcester.

◆ On behalf of the Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on *Pro Bono* Legal Services, Justice Francis X. Spina presented Adams *Pro Bono Publico* Awards to Newton Attorney Michael G. Paris, the New Bedford law firm of Stanford & Schall, and the Women's Bar Foundation on June 4, 2003. The second annual presentation of the Awards, named in honor of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, was made in recognition of the recipients' outstanding commitment to providing volunteer legal assistance to the poor and disadvantaged. Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall, Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey, and Committee Chair Mary K. Ryan, a partner in the Boston law firm of Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP, also spoke during the ceremony.

◆ The Probate and Family Court developed a Self Help Center on its pages of the court system website, www.state.ma.us/courts, for assisting members of the public and attorneys. Visitors may access electronic versions of the fourteen-part series, *Looking for Legal Assistance?* and the pamphlets *Before Asking for Help* and *Before Going Into Court*. The Center also contains links to other court and court-related sites.

◆ The Public Information Office facilitated visits to appellate courts and trial courts by groups of judges, attorneys, and students from around the world, including Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Russia, Slovakia, Thailand, Turkey, and Ukraine.

◆ The Judicial Institute completed and widely distributed the *Handbook of Legal Terms for Judicial Branch Personnel*. The 142-page booklet uses simple, common language to define legal and other court-related terms. The Institute also published the Substance Abuse Informational Newsletter.



Massachusetts judges and attorneys continued to share their expertise and ideas with members of the judicial system in Tomsk, Russia, as part of the Russian American Rule of Law Consortium sponsored by Open World and USAID. Members of the Massachusetts delegation that traveled to Tomsk in October, 2002 were, from left: Middlesex County Sheriff's Department Attorney Lee J. Gartenberg, then Committee for Public Counsel Services Attorney Geoffrey C. Packard, Norfolk County Assistant District Attorney Tanya Karpiak, State Representative Kevin J. Murphy, Superior Court Judge Mary-Lou Rup, Assistant U.S. Attorney William Welch II, and Supreme Judicial Court Justice Robert J. Cordy. A delegation led by Supreme Judicial Court Justice John M. Greaney also visited Tomsk in October, 2003.

The Massachusetts court system hosted return visits by Tomsk delegations in September, 2002, and September, 2003. Much of the emphasis of the exchange has been on conducting trials by jury, as Russian criminal procedure began requiring jury trials in criminal cases in January, 2003.

- ◆ Sixteen Boston area high school students successfully completed the thirteenth year of the Supreme Judicial Court's Judicial Youth Corps.



Administered by the Supreme Judicial Court Public Information Office, the program includes weekly educational sessions about the court system during the spring and summer, and seven weeks of paid summer internships, made possible in 2003 by a grant from the Boston Private Industry Council. The educational sessions are taught by dozens of judges, court employees, attorneys, and law enforcement personnel, who volunteer their time.

Judges, court staff, and other members of the legal community participated in a Law Day event for approximately sixty Cambridge Rindge and Latin students organized by Appeals Court Justice Fernande R.V. Duffly, eighth from left, and sponsored by the National Association of Women Judges' Color of Justice Program. Following two mock hearings, the students separated into small groups and discussed the cases with seventeen judges from the Appeals Court, Boston Municipal Court, Probate and Family Court, and Superior Court.

- ◆ The Supreme Judicial Court Public Information Office facilitated more than a dozen visits to appellate and trial courts by groups from middle schools, high schools and colleges to enable students to observe court proceedings and meet with judges, attorneys, and court personnel. On Student Government Day, held April 4, 2003, eighteen high school students and their teachers visited the Supreme Judicial Court and met with Justice Judith A. Cowin.

- ◆ Land Court forms were added to the court system website, www.state.ma.us/courts, and also were made available to attorneys through the website of the Real Estate Bar Association for Massachusetts.

Dozens of courts throughout the state hosted hundreds of students of all ages, community residents, and state and local leaders during celebrations of Law Day, May 1. Judges and court staff held speech, poster, and essay contests for students, conducted tours of their courthouses, and held ceremonies featuring a variety of guest speakers. In the photo, West Roxbury District Court First Justice Kathleen Coffey, at right, addresses a courtroom crowded with middle school students, teachers, parents and area residents during festivities that also included speeches by Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey, former Boston College basketball player Troy Bell, and the Reverend Roland Robinson, Associate Pastor of the nearby Bethel A.M.E. Church.

